

# Getting Away From It All

## More to do and see at the DuPuis Management Area

The famous American naturalist and poet Henry David Thoreau often said that the only way to appreciate and understand nature was to experience it. In south and central Florida, you don't need to travel far to find natural landscapes where you can observe and enjoy nature, and escape for a while from the fast pace and noise of the neighborhood or workplace.

Many of the lands acquired to preserve natural systems and water resources offer

opportunities for residents and visitors to hike or camp out; ride horses or watch birds; and to be as active, or inactively engaged in nature as you like. With the cooler temperatures of fall, these natural settings offer a tempting diversion from your daily routines. Discover Florida's natural beauty – along river banks, in live oak and sabal palm hammocks, sand pine forests, open prairies, or in wet cypress swamps randomly punctuated by gnarly cypress knees.

While 300,000 acres are available for recreational use, some lands are unsuited to public access. These include areas around large pump stations and water control structures as well as sensitive water-quality treatment marshes. Some properties destined to become part of Everglades restoration are being used for agriculture and are incompatible with recreation.



Our *Public Use Guide* provides access points and recreation opportunities on District water resource lands throughout south and central Florida. Get your copy by calling the Public Information Department at 800-432-2045, ext. 6883, or visit us on the internet at [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov)

### DUPUIS MANAGEMENT AREA

#### “VISITOR CENTER” OPENS IN JANUARY

The DuPuis Management Area, located in western Palm Beach and Martin counties, is an outdoor gem, which has been taking on a bit more “shine.” A new visitor center is scheduled to open in January 2003. It will include environmental education displays and a nature trail that winds through recreated native plant communities. A portion of the trail will be handicapped accessible. In addition, a new gate and parking facilities are being built to accommodate school buses. Other on-site enhancements include a butterfly garden.

Activities available on the 21,875-acre property include fishing, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, camping and environmental education. Observant visitors are likely to see white-tailed deer, foxes or river otters. Birds making their homes here include bald eagles, red shouldered hawks, barred owls and red-bellied woodpeckers.

The District and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission manage the land cooperatively. Call the DuPuis Administration Office at 772-924-5310 for general information. Call the Fish and Wildlife Commission at 772-625-5122 for fishing or hunting information.

**Getting there:** From I-95, take Exit 61 (S.R. 76 / Kanner Hwy) west to the property. From West Palm Beach, take the Beeline Highway (710) to S. R. 76 and go west. DuPuis is approximately 6 miles west of Indiantown. All of the entrance gates are on the south side of S.R. 76. Gate 1 is the main entrance; Gate 2 is the trailhead parking for hikers; Gate 3 is the equestrian center; and Gate 5 is the visitor center and administration office.

Ask Freddy!



Question selected from District letters and emails received from the public.

**Q** We often have excess amounts of water. Why can't it be shipped by tanker truck to other states that need it?

**A** While we certainly have a huge quantity of excess rainwater at times, most of it falls within the six-month wet season of June to November. Transporting it by truck or as some suggest via a pipeline to those states that need it might sound like a good idea, but it would not be economically feasible. As rainwater rolls off the ground, it picks up pollutants and excess nutrients from roads and farms, and from yards and shopping centers – which would make it undrinkable. This water would have to be treated to meet water quality standards. Once you add the costs of treatment and transportation, our “excess” water becomes very expensive.

The problem of storing excess water is one of the issues addressed in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). More information about the plan and its water storage components can be found at [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org)

## Everglades 101

Thanks to a partnership with the Newspapers In Education (NIE) program, *The Palm Beach Post* and Palm Beach County schools, lessons focusing on the Everglades will be delivered to and taught in every public middle school in Palm Beach County. Several other Florida newspapers, (the *Orlando Sentinel*, *Fort Myers News-Press*, *Naples Daily News*, *The Miami Herald*, Scripps Publications {Martin/St. Lucie} and the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*) are supporting the effort by delivering the Everglades material to even more local classrooms.

The “*Everglades: An American Treasure*” materials were developed for the 16-county school districts of southern and central Florida by the Palm Beach County School District – as part of its award-winning Benchmark Focus Lesson.

Almost 200,000 copies will be distributed to schools as well as other youth and adult education outlets. To supplement this material, the Philippe Cousteau Foundation worked with the South Florida Water Management District, Everglades National Park, NIE and numerous other groups this summer to produce an educational documentary that examines on-going Everglades restoration projects.

The 30-minute film, designed to complement the Newspapers In Education materials (*insert shown above*) will be viewed by an estimated 30,000 students in Palm Beach County.



### Who is Freddy?

His full name is “Freddy the Friendly Alligator.” He is the South Florida Water Management District's mascot.

You may have seen him on the signs that mark the region's canals and rivers.

Alligators are nature's water managers, and are what most people picture when they think about Florida.

Alligators dig deep holes in the swamp where they “hang out.” When drought strikes, these “gator holes” provide water and food (fish, turtles, insects) for many other species such as wading birds. At the same time, any creature sharing the alligator's territory could become its lunch! That's why people should remember that alligators are wild animals, which should be admired, but also avoided.

## CREDITS

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*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.*

*Our mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.*

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Newsletter Editor Seeks Bright Ideas

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